

# **Education and Workforce Development Cabinet KCDHH, Lexington Public Library unveil public access videophone**

**Press Release Date:** Tuesday, October 14, 2014

## **Contact Information:**

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Oct. 14, 2014)** — The Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) and Lexington Public Library have partnered to offer a free public videophone access station for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

To commemorate this milestone achievement, KCDHH and Lexington Public Library will host a public demonstration and meet-and-greet at 3 p.m., Friday, Oct. 17, at the Lexington Public Library Main Branch at 140 E. Main St., where the public videophone is located.

“Placement of this videophone represents a monumental first step in ensuring equal access to communications for all people in the Lexington area. Videophone technology differs from standard landlines in that it requires a high-speed Internet connection. Not everyone has access to high-speed Internet, so our public libraries are the logical choice as a location for a public videophone,” said Virginia L. Moore, KCDHH executive director. “We hope this pilot program takes off and provides the momentum for other libraries to follow suit.”

The station is the result of an initial partnership between KCDHH and the Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives (KDLA), the first of many such partnerships to advance the mission of equal access to communications throughout the state.

“We are so pleased to have the videophone for public use. It is important to us at the Lexington Public Library to be able to provide access for everyone in our community, and the videophone allows us to offer a great service to our deaf and hard-of-hearing community members,” said Tonya Head, Central Library manager. “We are so pleased to have it.”

The idea for the public videophone access station came from discussions within a KCDHH study group chaired by commission board member Sharon White, who is also president of the Kentucky Association of the Deaf (KAD). The study group had several conversations with the KDLA before selecting Lexington Public Library to be the pilot library for a public access videophone station.

“Videophone technology has become very important to people who are deaf, because it connects us in real time a lot quicker and a lot better than the old TTY devices did,” said White, who also serves as secretary of the KCDHH board and chairwoman of KCDHH’s Videophone Accessibility in Libraries Study Group. “It’s exciting to see the study group’s hard work pay off, and I’m proud to be part of this first step at getting videophones in every public library in the state.”